

It was Tuesday, September 19, 1961, when Betty and Barney Hill began the long drive home to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, from their modest holiday in Montreal. The couple had heard that a hurricane was making its way up the coast, and having already exceeded their budget for the vacation, they determined it was in their best interests to make the drive home overnight.



The vacation had been Barney's idea.

He was a dispatcher working the night shift at the Boston Post Office, a sixty-mile commute from his home in Portsmouth.



The late shift and the long commute were punishing, and he had recently begun treatment for an ulcer.

The job was not challenging to a man of Barney's intellect, but it was steady, and allowed him the time to focus on his work in the Civil Rights movement.




Barney was the legal redress chairman of the Portsmouth chapter of the NAACP.

He served on the advisory board of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, and on the board of directors of the Rockingham County Poverty Program.




He was, by all accounts, a congenial but serious man.







His wife, Betty Hill, was a social worker with the State of New Hampshire focusing on child welfare. In her evenings she volunteered her time to the NAACP.




She had been given a hefty caseload that year and had been looking forward to a week away from work.




Barney suggested the two drive up to Niagara Falls, then across the border to Montreal, and then home.




The two had never professed any real interest in UFOs or the paranormal.



Betty's sister claimed to have seen a flying saucer once, and Betty believed her.



Barney, on the other hand, dismissed the sighting as a figment of her sister's imagination.



As they left a late dinner in Colebrook, New Hampshire, they set off down Route 3, expecting empty roads and clear skies.







WE'VE GOT A LONG WAY TO GO, BETTY. WE CAN'T WASTE OUR TIME WITH THIS.



BARNEY, IF YOU THINK THAT'S A SATELLITE, YOU'RE BEING RIDICULOUS.

THEN IT'S PROBABLY JUST A PLANE ON ITS WAY TO CANADA.



I'M SURE OF IT.

I DON'T KNOW.



WHATEVER YOU'RE CALLING IT, BARNEY, IT'S STILL UP THERE AND IT'S *STILL* FOLLOWING US. IF ANYTHING, IT'S COMING RIGHT TOWARD US.



WITH A CRAZY COURSE LIKE THAT?

IT'S GOT TO BE A PLANE. A COMMERCIAL LINER.



STOP THE CAR. I WANT ANOTHER LOOK.



IT'S A PIPER CUB. THAT'S WHAT IT IS. WITH SOME HUNTERS. MAYBE THEY'RE LOST.



IT'S NOT THE HUNTING SEASON. AND I DON'T HEAR ANY PLANE.



IT MIGHT BE A HELICOPTER. THE WIND COULD BE CARRYING THE SOUND IN THE OTHER DIRECTION.



THERE IS NO WIND, BARNEY. NOT TONIGHT. YOU KNOW THAT.



